

The Seattle Ethics & Elections Commission

The SEEC is a seven-member, independent panel of citizen volunteers. The Commission and its staff are responsible for administering the City of Seattle Ethics, Elections, and Whistleblower Protection Codes. Three Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor, three by the City Council, and the seventh by the other six. They are confirmed by the City Council and serve overlapping three-year terms.

The Commission is supported by a staff of six employees who provide training, investigate complaints, and issue advisory opinions.

TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Ethics training and brochures are available by request. Information is also available at the Commission website, <http://www.seattle.gov/ethics/>.

COMMISSION MEETINGS

You are invited to attend any Commission meeting. Meetings are usually the first Wednesday of the month in the Seattle Municipal Tower.

Copies of the meeting agenda, including time and location, are in our office and on our Internet web site under Commission/ Agendas and Minutes. You can also call 206-684-8500 for meeting times and locations.

The Commission encourages City Board and Commission members to call SEEC staff at 206.684.8500 for advice.



This brochure highlights portions of the Seattle Ethics Code, SMC 4.16. The complete law is on the City Clerk's Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) web site, <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/code1.htm>. Copies are also available in the SEEC office.

ETHICS COMPLAINTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Anyone who feels a City officer or employee has violated the Ethics Code may complain in writing to the Ethics and Elections Commission. Commission staff will investigate whether there is a Code violation.

If it is found that a City officer, employee, or member of a board or commission violated the City's Ethics Code, the Commission may fine that person up to \$5,000 per violation plus costs and restitution. The commission may also recommend disciplinary action, including suspension or discharge.

A complaint may be dismissed if there is a violation of the code or if the violation is minor and inadvertent or has already been remedied.

ADVICE

You are encouraged to seek advice from the Commission on whether or not a planned activity raises issues under the City's Ethics Code.



City of Seattle
Ethics and Elections Commission
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4010

206.684.8500

Fax: 206.684.8590

E-mail: ethicsandelections@seattle.gov

Postal mail: PO Box 94729 Seattle, WA 98124-4729

Web: http://www.seattle.gov/ethics/etpub/et_home.htm

Contacts:

Wayne Barnett, Executive Director, 206.684.8577

wayne.barnett@seattle.gov

Mardie Holden, Trainer, 206.684.0595

mardie.holden@seattle.gov

10/2006



City of Seattle

Highlights of the Code of Ethics Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 4.16

*For Members of City Boards, Commissions, and Committees**



This pamphlet is intended to help members of City boards and commissions to understand the conduct expected of them under the Seattle Ethics Code.

**A separate brochure is available for members of Advisory Committees.*

Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission

Your advocate for fair, open, and honest government.

Congratulations on your committee appointment!



We appreciate your service to the City of Seattle. This brochure explains the City's Ethics Code and how it relates to your responsibilities as a member of a City Board or commission. We hope you find the information helpful.

THE ETHICS CODE

SEATTLE MUNICIPAL CODE ~ SMC 4.16

The Seattle Ethics Code was created to inspire public trust in City government and ensure that City officers and employees are “independent, impartial, and responsible to the people.” The law is administered by an independent commission of citizen volunteers.

The Code sets ethical standards about work activities, business relationships, and the use of City resources that apply to all City employees, elected officials, and members of most City boards and commissions.

This brochure highlights areas of the Code that relate to the activities of individuals serving on City Boards, Commissions, and Committees, other than advisory committees. *A separate brochure is available for advisory committee members. The Ethics Code does not apply to members of ad hoc advisory committees, which are not established by law.*

A copy of the full Ethics Code is available from the Ethics and Elections Commission or on line at the City Clerk's web site, <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/code1.htm>. You are encouraged to call the SEEC Executive Director staff if you have any questions.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ETHICS CODE

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

You must disqualify yourself from Committee decisions or transactions if you have an actual or apparent, direct or indirect, financial or private interest in the matter under consideration. You cannot participate in decisions that affect current or former partners or clients for twelve months after ending the relationship. You must disclose private interests or contracts that you have with the City. *SMC 4.16.070(1), (2), (5)*

USE OF POSITION

City positions cannot be used for the benefit or gain of a private individual or group. Generally, City titles cannot be used when supporting or endorsing a product or service. When acting in this manner, you should not identify yourself by your City position or association. *SMC 4.16.070(2)(a), (c)*

PRIVILEGED INFORMATION

Do not disclose or use any proprietary or confidential information gained through your official position on the board. *SMC 4.16.070(4)*

GIFTS OR ITEMS OF VALUE

Generally speaking, you may not solicit or accept anything of value from individuals with interest in your board's work. *SMC 4.16.070(3) and (2)(b)*



CITY FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

City resources—including telephones, equipment, office space, stationery, and staff—are to be used for City purposes. These and other City resources should not be used for purposes other than those related to the function, duties, and responsibilities of your committee. *SMC 4.16.070(2)(b)*

FINANCIAL INTEREST STATEMENTS

Each year members of some boards and commissions are required to submit financial disclosure forms, which identify their financial stake in entities that do business with the City. This information helps to protect against actual or apparent conflicts of interest, or personal profit or benefit from a City transaction. *SMC 4.16.080*

AFTER LEAVING CITY APPOINTMENT

You must wait one year after leaving your City appointment before you can (i) assist others in proceedings involving your former agency, (ii) assist or represent others on matters in which you were officially involved, or (iii) compete for contracts when you helped determine the scope of work or the process for selecting a contractor. You are encouraged to call for advice when you are contemplating such an action. *SMC 4.16.075 and 4.16.030 (K) and (M)*

These highlights are a general summary of the Ethics Code as it applies to members of City of Seattle boards, commissions, and committees. If you have questions or would like advice on a specific issue, please contact the Executive Director. A separate brochure describes the Code for members of advisory committees.